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KWAPA FOLK-LORE.¹

THE Kwapa or Quapaw tribe of Indians are identical with the Pacaha or Capaha who were met by De Soto when he discovered the Mississippi River. After 1877, the greater part of the tribe removed from their reservation in the northeastern corner of the Indian Territory, and settled among the Osage tribe, in what is now part of Oklahoma Territory. Since then, these Kwapa have been called "Osage Quapaws" by those remaining on the old reservation. The present writer first saw the Kwapa when he was on the Osage reservation, in January, 1883. In January, 1884, he visited the Quapaw reservation in the northeastern corner of the Indian Territory, and remained there three weeks. During that time only a few folk-lore notes were recorded, and these are now presented.

The Kwapa tell of a serpent called *We-sa pa-ktcan-ka-ha*, *i. e.* Serpent with a head at each end. It is said to be about eighteen inches in length, and it is very rarely seen. They spoke of a tiny species of water tortoise, the *ke ja^r-qa*, which no one is allowed to lift by the tail lest there be a flood. With reference to the Great Dipper, they say that the bowl represents a body in the grave; the next star is a person bringing food to the grave; then comes a woman to get the food, and behind her is a child crying for its mother. The North Star is called the star that goes nowhere. The Aurora is called *Ma-xe u-ta-sa^r-ha*, which may be translated, Upper world which shines with a white light. The Milky Way is called the Road of the Ghosts. A circle of stars with one in the centre is called Girls dancing; but it has not been identified. When the moon is full, the Kwapa say that a man stands within it holding the head of another man. This may be compared with the Dakota story of the Boy Beloved and Bead Spitter, as recorded by the late Dr. S. R. Riggs, in "Contributions to North American Ethnology," vol. ix. pp. 148, 149.

The Kwapa believe in the existence of dwarfs, whom they call *Pahi zkajika*, Small ones with white hair, and *Wakantake jika*, Small mysterious ones. They are not seen often. They tell also of a giant woman, whose breasts, reaching to her waist, she throws over her shoulders when she wishes to nurse the children whom she has stolen. The Kwapa have persons named after the *Tar-na* or Thunder people, who make their abode in the upper world. They have among their names for females, *Teti na*, which points to a belief that there have been persons who could call the quadrupeds in a mysterious

¹ Paper read at the Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, Washington, December 28, 1895.

manner, compelling them to approach within shooting distance of the hunters. Mud-hens are called, *Nitaje na*pé*, or Fearing to see Waves. There is a bird called *Pite tañka* or Large Acorn: it is larger than a humming-bird, the feathers on the body are of a bluish color, those on the temples are dark, and on the middle of the head are red dots. In the spring of the year this bird is said to cry, "*Far*qdca jite!* *Far*qdca jite!*" i. e. "Red buds! Red buds!" The members of the Elk gens cannot eat elk meat if it be so called, but if they call it venison, they can eat it with impunity. I could not learn of the existence of any other taboo among the Kwapa. While endeavoring to obtain a full list of the personal names of the tribe, I met with considerable difficulty on account of the reluctance of the people to communicate to me the information which they regarded as the peculiar right of a class of men whom they called the "*Wapina*". A *wapina* they defined as a *nika quwe* or mysterious man, answering to the *waka* man of the Dakota tribes.

Kahike stete (Tall Chief) or Lewis Angells, is a chief or *kahike* as well as the principal *wapina* of the tribe. His subordinate *wapina* is one of the two Kwapa men known as *Nañka tu* or Green Back. The latter made his home on the Quapaw reservation, and I saw him there this year. The former resides among the "Osage Quapaws" on the Osage reservation, about thirty miles from the Osage Agency, Oklahoma Territory. Tall Chief, in his capacity of *wapina*, is obliged to go back and forth every year to administer to the spiritual wants of both divisions of the Kwapa nation. As chief *wapina*, Tall Chief is the custodian of all the Kwapa personal names. Whenever a person is adopted into the Kwapa nation, the presence of Tall Chief is essential, for he alone can bestow the personal name.

When the life of a Kwapa is supposed to be in danger from illness, he (or she) desires to abandon his (or her) personal name. Application is made to another member of the tribe, who goes to Tall Chief, and from him purchases a new name which is given to the patient. With the abandonment of the old name, it is supposed that the sickness, too, is thrown off. On the reception of the new name, the patient becomes related to the Kwapa who has purchased the name from Tall Chief. Any Kwapa can change or abandon his (or her) personal name four times; but it is considered bad luck to attempt such a thing for the fifth time. Tall Chief regulates marriages. While I was on the Quapaw reservation in January, the coming of Tall Chief was looked for every day. I was informed that on his arrival he would perform the marriage ceremony for some of the young people, without regarding their individual preferences.

F. Owen Dorsey.